

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINSHA 09264 251937Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
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INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BANGUI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE PRIORITY POUCH
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KIGALI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 9264

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELTN, AO, CG
SUBJECT: REOPENING OF THE BENGUELA RAILROAD

REF: A) KINSHASA 9012; B) KINSHASA 8481; C) LUBUMBASHI 913;
D) LONDON 12969; E) STATE 200867; F) STATE 211378
G) KINSHASA 9219;

1. SUMMARY: JURIDICAL COUNSELOR IN ZAIRIAN PRESIDENT'S
OFFICE WHO HAS TAKEN PART IN RECENT GOA/GOZ MIXED COM-
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PAGE 02 KINSHA 09264 251937Z

MISSION MEETINGS HAS PROVIDED CHARGE SOME FRAGMENTS OF
INFORMATION ON STATUS OF PLANS FOR REOPENING BENGUELA
RAILROAD. ALTHOUGH BOTH SIDES REPORTEDLY ARE COMMITTED
TO MOVING AHEAD, GOZ PROBABLY DOUBTS THAT ANGOLANS CAN
ASSURE SECURITY OF LINE AND THEREFORE ARE IN NO PARTICULAR
HURRY TO COMMIT ZAIRIAN RESOURCES TO WHAT THEY CONSIDER
ENTERPRISE WITH DOUBTFUL PROSPECTS

FOR TIME BEING. GOZ MAY ALSO SEE BENGUELA AS SHOAL ON WHICH OTHER ASPECTS OF RECONCILIATION COULD FOUNDER.
END SUMMARY

2. DURING AUGUST 23 MEETING WITH PRESIDENCY OFFICIALS, BOKANA AND MUKE (REF G), I SOUGHT FURTHER INFORMATION ON PLANNED REOPENING OF BENGUELA RAILROAD. MUKE SAID THAT CONSIDERABLE EFFORT HAS BEEN DEVOTED BY BOTH SIDES TO ASCERTAINING "OWNERSHIP" OF DILOLO BRIDGE. WHEN TWO SIDES FAILED TO RESOLVE ISSUE, ANGOLANS OFFERED TO PERFORM REPAIRS ALONE. GOZ HAD ACCEPTED GOA OFFER BUT FELT THAT ZAIRE SHOULD HELP EVENTUALLY TO DEFRAID BRIDGE REPAIR EXPENSES IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN ANY GOZ OWNERSHIP EQUITY WHICH ARCHIVES MIGHT EVENTUALLY PROVE SHOULD BE CLAIMED. MUKE SAID THAT NEITHER SIDE WAS INCLINED TO DELAY REPAIRS FURTHER ON THAT SCORE AND THAT ANGOLANS REPORTEDLY WERE ALREADY SURVEYING THE DAMAGE.

3. MUKE SAID ANGOLANS HAD ALREADY INFORMED GOZ THAT RAILROAD IS OPERATIONAL ALL THE WAY FROM BORDER TO LOBITO. HE COULD PROVIDE NO MEANINGFUL INFORMATION ABOUT ACTUAL SECURITY OF RAILWAY ON EITHER SIDE OF FRONTIER. HE SAID THAT ANGOLANS HAD SOUGHT TO ENGAGE GOZ IN ASSURING SECURITY ON ANGOLAN PORTION OF LINE. GOZ REFUSED, SAYING THAT THIS WOULD IMPLICATE ZAIRE IN ANGOLA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS. EACH SIDE HAD FINALLY COMMITTED ITSELF TO "GUARANTEEING CIR-
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PAGE 03 KINSHA 09264 251937Z

CULATION AND SECURITY" ON ITS OWN TERRITORY. GOZ IS SKEPTICAL THAT ANGOLANS WILL BE ABLE TO DEFEND RAILWAY FROM ATTACKS, ESPECIALLY BY UNITA, BUT ALSO BY EX-KATANGANS SEEKING TO DESTROY ZAIRIAN SHIPMENTS. HE SAID GOZ IS NOT SURE HOW SECURE LINE IS IN SHABA, BUT ASSUMES THAT IT CAN BE KEPT OPEN AT LEAST WHILE AFRICAN FORCE REMAINS.

4. MUKE SAID THAT GOA TOLD GOZ THAT LOBITO PORT FACILITIES WILL BE EXPANDED BUT PROVIDED NO FURTHER INFORMATION ON SITUATION THERE.

5. MUKE SAID GOZ HAS INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION TO REPLY TO OTHER QUESTIONS CONTAINED PARA 5 REF E, BUT PRESIDENCY IS ASKING DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO MAKE A SURVEY OF SHABA PORTION OF LINE.

6. COMMENT: MY ZAIRIAN SOURCE PUT AN OPTIMISTIC LIGHT ON POSSIBILITIES FOR REOPENING BENGUELA AND KEEPING IT OPEN. AT SAME TIME I HAVE DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT GOZ SEES BENGUELA AS PRIME SHOAL ON WHICH RECONCILIATION COULD FOUNDER. GOZ EFFORTS TO SURVEY RAILROAD AND GET READY FOR REOPENING ARE NOTABLY LACKING IN DYNAMISM.

WHILE IT IS TOO EARLY TO ANALYZE GOZ MOTIVES WITH ANY CERTAINTY,
EARLY INDICATIONS ARE THAT ZAIRIANS PREFER TO MOVE AHEAD
ON OTHER ASPECTS OF RECONCILIATION BUT GIVE THE BENGUELA
REOPENING COMPARATIVELY LOWER PRIORITY. MOBUTU PROBABLY
INTENDS TO GO ALONG WITH REOPENING PLANS AND SEE TO WHAT
EXTENT ANGOLANS CAN CARRY OUT PROMISES TO KEEP THEIR
PORTION OF THE LINE OPEN. OUR JUDGMENT IS THAT ZAIRIANS
REMAIN SKEPTICAL THAT GOA CAN BRING IT OFF AND
THEREFORE ARE IN NO HURRY TO COMMIT SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES
OR ATTENTION TO SUCH DUBIOUS PROSPECTS.
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